

tried. We have spent over 50 hours and, as far as I am concerned, everyone was there in good faith. The discussions were long, frank, and candid. In fact, I read about a lot of them in the Washington Post. If I had missed all the meetings, I would have known all about them because they were fairly accurate renditions of what happened. It was in four installments. It did not have everything in there, but almost.

I think the basic problem is just this fundamental difference we have on each side of the aisle on the role of Government and giving power back to the States, letting the Governors and legislatures, whether it is on welfare or Medicaid, make the decisions, and whether or not we should have tax cuts for families with children—not for the rich, but for families with children. I must say, in that area both the President and the Republicans have a tax credit. So it is not that we think tax credits are bad. We cap ours. The President caps his. We are trying to get the package together. We also know we are not going to be successful unless we deal with entitlements. Everybody will recognize, including the entitlement commission, which was chaired by Senator KERREY of Nebraska and Senator Danforth of Missouri, who recognized that entitlements were out of hand and needed to be addressed. If we do not do something to preserve and strengthen Medicare, it is going to be in real trouble in a few years.

So if there is movement—again, I say this without any criticism—I think the movement has to come from the President. We have indicated many, many times that we have moved substantially on the Republican side, whether it was on Medicare or Medicaid, or whether it was the earned income tax credit, or whether it was tax reductions. All those four programs we put in a little box and we have indicated how much we have come in the President's direction and how little he has come in our direction.

So if there is to be an agreement—and I say it as fairly as I can—I think the President needs to make a response. Until that happens, I do not see any real reason to sit down for additional meetings. There is still an opportunity and still some glimmer of hope, as I said.

With reference to the continuing resolution, which is currently funding Government, it does expire at the end of this week. I do not find much support, as I travel around the country, for another Government shutdown. We can point our fingers at the President for vetoing three major appropriations bills, which would have put nearly every one of the workers back to work. He can point his finger at us saying we permitted the Government to shut down.

I think the American people really do not understand. They do not like it. I know the Federal employees do not like it, and others do not know why we pay people for not working, although

in this case the Federal employees were willing workers and were prepared to go to work.

Our response this week is clear: Keep faith with our principles and keep our word to the American people and also to keep faith with Federal employees who should not be the pawns in this game, I think, as the Washington Post said in an editorial 2, 3, or 4 weeks ago.

That is what we have coming up this week. The President will address the Congress and the American people tomorrow night on the State of the Union. I think I will respond to that. I think that will happen.

Then, as far as I know, if we can work it out, there will be no votes the remainder of the week. We will let Members know on each side. I will discuss this with the Democratic leader, Senator DASCHLE. Then we will also outline plans for the next week and the week after that as we go into February.

PROVIDING FOR THE STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Senate Concurrent Resolution 39, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GRAMS). The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 39) providing for the State of the Union Address by the President of the United States.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the concurrent resolution?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the concurrent resolution.

The concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 39) was agreed to, as follows:

S. CON. RES. 39

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That the two Houses of Congress assemble in the Hall of the House of Representatives on Tuesday, January 23, 1996, at 9 p.m., for the purpose of receiving such communication as the President of the United States shall be pleased to make to them.

Mr. DOLE. I move to reconsider that motion, and I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 1 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 5 minutes each.

AGRICULTURE CONCERNS

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, one of the things that I learned when I was back in my State was that there is serious concern in the agriculture community about the failure to have a farm bill in place before this new crop season begins.

Already, farmers are having to make decisions about the kinds of activity that they will pursue on their lands this year, and without the guidance of the provisions as to agriculture programs from the Government, a lot are put in a position of having to guess and to simply operate on the basis of faith in the fact that Government might come to some agreement on agriculture programs sometime this crop year.

It was one of the casualties of the veto by the President of the Balanced Budget Act that we do not have in place now commodity programs to guide our agriculture producers in making their decisions. Lenders are reluctant to make loans for funds to begin the operations of this crop year without that same kind of certainty, as well.

What I am suggesting is that another high priority for legislative action, as soon as possible, in addition to the conference report on the defense authorization bill mentioned by our majority leader, is action on a farm bill, or action that will put in place some temporary arrangement for income protection, the other provisions that are usually found in commodity programs in the Agriculture Act.

One suggestion that I know is being discussed today among House and Senate Members is whether or not this continuing resolution that could come over from the House include provisions of the Balanced Budget Act as they pertain to the agriculture programs. That is something that is being discussed.

I do not know how that will come out in terms of trying to get bipartisan agreement. I support that. We have passed that twice now in the House and in the Senate. It was part of the Balanced Budget Act sent to the President. I hope we can come to some resolution of this. I urge the Senate and particularly those on our Committee on Agriculture to weigh in with their thoughts and advice and counsel on this subject so we can reach a decision at the earliest possible time.

We will put at risk, Mr. President, a lot of farmers all over the country—not just in my State but all over the country—who do not know what the program is going to be. Is there going to be a program? The Secretary says he will implement himself a rice program if no action is taken by the Congress. In my State, that is an important commodity. What is the program going to be? We do not know.

I think it is an obligation, and it would be a very serious act of irresponsibility if this Congress does not soon settle on a farm program for this crop